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YELLOWSTONE BACK COUNTRY



Ed. Chapman

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As one means of accomplishing its aims the Association has published a series of reasonably priced booklets which are available for purchase by mail throughout the year or at the museum information desks in the Park during the summer.

Yellowstone Back Country



by

W. SCOTT CHAPMAN

Published by the
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FOREWORD

Last summer I traveled inland on Frank Island in Yellowstone Lake. We left the dory at the Lake shore, noting there a thin line of evidence of fishermen use—an occasional tiny scrap of foil, a bit of paper, a bottle cap. We stepped across this and walked directly inland on the widest part of the island. In ten steps we were among the spruce and fir and left all of civilization behind us. Twenty paces and we were traveling a forest floor of duff incredibly deep and springy. Fifty paces and we stopped to survey our wilderness environs. The forest was not neat—dead trees, leaning trees, decaying vegetation—along with healthy, vigorous youngsters on their way up to their own dominant maturity and eventual decline and return to the forest litter.

In the density of the spruce forest there was little underbrush, but a noisy squirrel, a timid chipmunk, a noisy bee, the flash of color of a butterfly kept the forest from seeming lifeless. And, everywhere was the pervading quiet and peace of nature as man first found it. We **dreamed** that we were the first humans to set foot upon this spot and we may well have been for, practically, there was no reason for people to travel there. The feeling of being alone was never before so strong within me. My companions were equally silent, weighted by the same immensity of isolation, of deep memories of man alone in primeval forest.

It could have been frightening, but it was not. Our joys were of contemplation, of relaxing flow of vigor into us from the **dream-like** quality of our wooded habitat. We were almost intruders and we spoke seldom and then almost in whispers. Yet we were not intruders for somehow we too were naturally part of nature, belonging here as in no other place.

As we walked quietly back to the boat, our wilderness nook was enlivened by a glimpse of one of nature's continuing dramas. An osprey flew into sight loaded with a still flopping trout of some size, struggling homeward to its wilderness treetop nest to feed its voracious youngsters. But life is competitive and life is cruel in nature: the osprey had captured the trout; a bald eagle was vigorously attacking the osprey, hoping to force it to drop its prey so the eagle could stoop to retrieve it. The osprey labored heavily to reach the lakeside fringe of trees to avoid the eagle, and flapping vigorously around blow them both along the Lake shore was a raven anticipating that the eagle would be successful in forcing the osprey to drop the fish and then be unsuccessful in recovering it. The scene was simply a flash as they all disappeared behind nearby trees, but we were again humbled with our own recognition of our being simply part of this natural state of the battle for survival.

We left refreshed, stimulated, bright-eyed with wonder, richer for this interlude in our temporarily forgotten tasks. Wild lands have this quality of challenge and absorbing our whole attention for as long as we remain within their spell.

Actually of course, this was “instant” wilderness, attained without any particular travail or effort. Wilderness has been experienced in many other guises and forms. The exhilaration of standing alone on a back-country mountain peak is another form of wilderness experience. The challenge of slogging along a back trail with a pack and in a rain storm is another. The comfort and long dreams stimulated by a tiny evening campfire is another.

Whatever your choice, the opportunity for such experience lies before you in Yellowstone National Park’s back country. For those with singing blood, with far-seeing eyes, with ears attuned to the distant cry of a loon or a coyote, this can be glorious adventure. To help these understanding seekers of quality back-country enjoyment, we present this little wilderness trail guide for Yellowstone. Many other parks or National Forest wilderness lands offer similar invitation. This book happens to be about Yellowstone.

It was written by my friend William Scott Chapman, recently retired Yellowstone National Park district ranger after over 30 years experience on the trails and byways of our magnificent back country. Scotty has always loved this aspect of his work and “his” Park—he shares his enthusiasm and knowledge with you here. The stimulating illustrations are by his son Bill, who is a most competent young artist who grew up in the Park and now lives near it as he pursues his profession of painting and sketching.

This is your invitation for wilderness adventure in Yellowstone. Many Happy Journeys is our wish for you, the user.

Lon Garrison
Park Superintendent

INTRODUCTION

During my 32 years as a Park ranger in Yellowstone I have made many camps in its back country. Every campsite mentioned in this little booklet has been "tested" by me at least once, some many times. It's a large area, some camps were made long ago, and time has not permitted me to get back to make all of them twice; others were made during July 1962.

Good mountain horses are not as plentiful as they used to be and, as a result, more persons are backpacking. This is especially true of the young people who come to work for the Park concessioners. Every year more of them come equipped with light packs with which to make pleasant, healthful, overnight trips on the back-country trails. This is a wonderful way to put the President's health program into effect and, at the same time, learn to be self-reliant under primitive conditions.

The purpose of this booklet is to stimulate your interest

in the Yellowstone wilderness. I hope you will cherish and help protect this priceless resource.

I greatly appreciate the time and opportunity Superintendent Lemuel A. Garrison has given me to write this guide. I am glad my son, Bill, has had the job of making the maps and drawings. Bill had ridden nearly every trail in Yellowstone before he was 14 years old. He grew up here and loves this country.

Now, with the close of the Introduction, the personal pronoun, "I," will no longer appear in this booklet.

W. Scott Chapman





AN UNMATCHED WILDERNESS RESOURCE

It is as hard to define wilderness as it is justice or beauty, yet we Americans need one just as much as we need the other two. We have gone to some lengths to identify and preserve segments of our wilderness heritage in our nation's parks and national forests, nevertheless resistance to the Wilderness Bill is a measure of the strength of special interests that oppose the whole idea of wilderness preservation.

If this idea grows, it is because most Americans want it to grow. We should be interested in this land-use problem, and your interest is indicated by the fact that you are reading this booklet. If you hike a few miles or take a weeklong pack trip, you will gain wilderness experience which will help you decide whether or not wilderness is really worth preserving.

There are many reasons why the wilderness of Yellowstone Park is of such outstanding value to the Nation. It is close to large centers of population, yet it contains the greatest assortment of natural wonders to be found anywhere. It is a pristine wilderness, not reclaimed wild land worked and then left to become a second-rate primitive area.

The composition of Yellowstone's forests and grasslands are ideal for wild areas. The trees are of no great value as timber. The grasslands along streams, on the high plateaus, and in mountain parks provide forage for wild instead of domestic animals. The vegetation also provides important protection to a watershed which furnishes the greater part of the water in such streams as the Yellowstone, Madison, and Gallatin.

Because of its wilderness nature and laws against hunting, the remote parts of Yellowstone are among the last strongholds of animals which require wilderness to survive. The grizzly bear, elk, bighorn, and bison require vast areas in which to roam if they are to live, breed, and die in their old natural ways. And so it is with

such majestic birds as the bald eagle, the great gray owl, the trumpeter swan, and the raven.

In its management of Yellowstone, the National Park Service has established policies and regulations aimed at preserving the wilderness for you and succeeding generations. Back-country fires are fought with handtools; patrols are made on foot or on horseback to hold man's disturbing effects to a minimum. Wilderness trails are built to low standards and some creeks are not bridged in the belief that the hand of man should press lightly on the land.

Many park visitors ask why more roads aren't built into the Yellowstone wilderness so that everyone can see it. The answer is that the present road system is built in wilderness and takes the motorist to every major scenic attraction through meadow and forest identical to that away from the road. Should one expect to drive to every mountaintop and up every valley? Or should we reserve most of this wilderness for the plants and animals which have always lived there and for the people willing to make the necessary effort to get there on horseback or on foot? This question answers itself.

The National Park Service encourages the use of its unsurpassed park wilderness resources. The trails are well marked, safe, and lead into and through stunningly beautiful country. You need not be a Sir Edmund Hillary or a Tenzing to hike and enjoy the Yellowstone trails nor is a load of specialized equipment necessary. You do need time—a couple of hours, a half day—to savor a bit of wilderness and enjoyment, and you do need an inquiring mind. A little of each, however, will carry a person far into a new and wonderful world. Why not you and your family?

ABOUT THE PARK

Originally, Yellowstone National Park was rectangular in shape, about 54 miles wide and 62 miles long. Subsequent boundary changes were made to conform with the topography of the Absaroka Mountains on the east and the Gallatin Mountains on the north and west. These changes brought the area within the new Park boundaries into a more easily administered unit and national forests adjacent to the Park benefited in a like manner, with no loss of basic values due to the land exchanges.

The Park is now 2,221,772 acres in size, or 3,472 square miles. In order that we can better understand why the back country of Yellowstone is so attractive, a brief general description of the area is in order. Later we will become more detailed as suggestions for trips into specific parts of the Park are made.

Yellowstone National Park is essentially a high rolling plateau or series of plateaus surrounded by mountain ranges—the Absaroka Mountains along the east, the Gallatin and Madison Ranges along

the west, and the Tetons to the south. The Continental Divide cuts off the southwest corner of the Park, dividing those waters flowing to opposite oceans.

The Yellowstone River originates some 20 miles south of the southeast corner of the Park and flows north into Yellowstone Lake. It resumes its course to the north after leaving the Lake and meanders tranquilly across Hayden Valley. When it reaches the Upper Falls of the Yellowstone, it changes character completely and is rugged and brawling through the Grand Canyon to Tower Fall where, losing no speed, it roars through the Black Canyon and leaves the Park at Gardiner in a somewhat subdued but far from completely tamed manner.

The Yellowstone River is a superlative asset. In the mountain meadows along its headwaters the northern Yellowstone elk herd summers. Along the migration routes which parallel it the same elk herd migrates in the autumn down this great waterway to winter near the north boundary of the Park. As a fishery this river is without peer. Above the Falls, at the Canyon, the native cutthroat is the only game fish found in the river. At Tower Fall, rainbow are found as well and as we go downstream whitefish and brown trout also appear in the catch in increasing numbers.

One fork of the Snake River also originates south of the Park, but on the Pacific slope. It flows north into the Park, swings to the west, and out again at the South Entrance.



The Firehole River rises down in the southwest section of the Park near the Continental Divide. It flows north, meets the Gibbon River at Madison Junction, and together they form the Madison. The Madison flows out of the Park not far from the West Entrance. At Three Forks, Montana, it is one of the three rivers which unite at that point to make the Missouri. The Firehole River is probably the finest publicly owned, dry fly stream in the world. Due to its abundant aquatic insect life and the tempering influence of the warm springs, trout propagate naturally, grow rapidly, and, unlike so many streams where brown trout predominate, they do not turn naturally to cannibalism as they grow older. Instead they retain their preference for insects. It is not uncommon to see the largest trout in the stream rising to a hatch as methodically as 12-inchers do. Let us hope that powerful present-day detergents never leech out into this stream and reduce its productivity.

There is considerable altitudinal range in Yellowstone National Park. The North Entrance at Gardiner is only a little over a mile above sea level; the altitude at Yellowstone Lake is 7733 feet; the park plateaus average about 8,000 feet; and Eagle Peak in the southeastern part of the Park is 11,358 feet high, the highest point in Yellowstone. Naturally, in going from 5,300 feet to over 10,000 feet you pass through a number of so-called life zones. If you classify the Park's flora in a general way starting at the North Entrance, you find sagebrush-grassland, passing into the limited Douglas fir forest at about 5,500 feet. This area has been described as the Transition Life Zone. From this zone you enter the Canadian Life Zone, so-called because the flora and climate here remind you of the forests found in parts of Canada. This zone takes in much of the Park plateau where the extensive lodgepole forests and some of the grassy valleys up to 8,000 feet are found. It is here that great numbers of wildlife live in the summer; however, when flies are bad and after the grasses in the higher mountains develop, many of the large game animals go higher into the Hudsonian Life Zone. This lies above the Canadian Life Zone up to about 9,500 feet. Fir, spruce, and whitebark pine are the principal trees. These stands of trees are often interspersed among great open beds of mountain flowers. Treeline in the Park occurs somewhere around 10,000 feet, and from here to the tops of the higher mountains no trees occur.

However, mountain grasses, such as alpine bunchgrass, bring some elk, bighorn, and the blue grouse from the adjoining zone as visitors.

We have deviated from the business at hand only long enough briefly to describe this remarkable area. It is yours, accessible and waiting to be explored by you.

BECHLER AREA

This area includes the whole Cascade Corner of the Park and the Madison and Pitchstone Plateaus as well. This is a large, roadless country, about 35 miles long and averaging some 18 miles or so in width. A great variety of wilderness trips may be taken here by horseback, backpack, or canoeing.

The Bechler River is on the Pacific slope, and the Cascade Corner has a somewhat warmer and moister climate than does most of the rest of the Park. This climatic difference might not be noticeable to you, but it is sufficient to let somewhat more succulent vegetation grow. The huckleberries are more plump and juicy, and the aspen trees between the Bechler River Ranger Station and the Bechler Meadows are larger and straighter than those found in drier parts of the Park.

In the past there has been a large autumn migration of elk and deer from the Cascade Corner of the Park down the Snake River Valley. Their old winter ranges are now devoted to intensive agriculture and the animals are restricted in their movements. Now they can only go as far as the foothills just southwest of the Park during the winter. A small herd winters on the Boundary Creek thermal areas in the Park. Moose are common in that ideal habitat.

The Bechler River Meadows are, in part, quite swampy. In fact, during the spring runoff, the entire meadow often becomes a large shallow lake, and it is only after the water recedes and the streams go down that you can travel over many of the trails. From about mid-July until the latter part of September is the best time to plan a trip into the Bechler country. The later the better in order to avoid mosquitoes which thrive in this area as do horseflies.

The last authentic observation of the whooping crane in Yellowstone was made in the Bechler area over 30 years ago. Sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, ducks, and shore birds find an ideal home in the meadows and swamps of the Bechler.

Hot springs and thermal activity are where you find them in the Bechler country. On the trail from the Bechler River Ranger Station to Buffalo Lake, you will be surprised to find that a main fork of Robinson Creek is warm while the next one crossed is cold. Some years ago an elderly man who was elk hunting just adjacent to the Park became lost, wandered into the Park, and, after two nights without food, bed, or fire, decided to lie down in the warm stream, until rescued. The next morning he was found relaxing in his warm bath not too much the worse for this experience.

The trail from Rocky Ford on the Bechler River to Grassy Lake follows, for the most part, an old wagon road built by the Mormons in the 1880's from Marysville, Idaho, to Jackson Hole. Trees several inches in diameter have grown between the two wagon tracks making it now a horse trail only.

The Bechler River and its tributaries abound in waterfalls. It is also a good trout stream. Some exceptionally large cutthroat are taken from the river, especially in that part where it crosses Bechler Meadows.

A pack trip from the Bechler River Ranger Station to Old Faithful can be made in two days, or you can make several camps en route, spend several days, and really enjoy the country.

Four miles from Bechler Station you come to the Bechler Meadows. The first stream is Boundary Creek. A good campsite with a pole horse corral is located at this junction. After fording Boundary Creek you cross the meadows, and two miles farther on is Bechler River. Here is an ideal place to camp, lots of horsefeed, groves of trees to camp in, a view of the Teton Mountains to the southeast, and good fishing in the river. This is a short first day, so you should get an early start the next morning up the Bechler Canyon. The ride up the Canyon is beautiful. There are large spruce, fir and, in contrast, occasional tall white-barked aspen, lush undergrowth of thimbleberry, raspberry, and huckleberry bushes as well as ferns and mosses. Colonnade and Iris Falls will bring a halt for pictures and perhaps the fisherman will try his luck in the pool below Colonnade.

Three Rivers Junction makes a good lunch stop. Here is a warm stream to wash in and a cold one from which to drink. It is here that the Phillips fork, the Littles Fork, and the Ferris Fork unite to form the Bechler River. Too much overnight camping is not encouraged here because a large number of horses may soon exhaust the feed. It's quite a climb from the junction up Littles Fork to the first sizeable meadows where a campsite can be selected. This has been an enjoyable day; however, not too many miles have been covered and there is still time to explore. There is a cave near Tempe Cascade. Though not very deep, it is large enough in which to erect a tent. The rangers did so years ago and used it as an emergency camp several times while on winter patrols in this area.

From the meadows on Littles Fork, you can see Douglas and Trischman Knobs. These easily recognized features were named for two early park rangers whose prowess as mountain men was legendary.

The third day out, the Continental Divide, although not too well defined, is crossed. When you reach Shoshone Creek, take time out for a lunch and rest. After lunch, you go through Grants Pass down to the Firehole River and end the trip at Lone Star Geyser. There is a base campsite at Lone Star Geyser where the campgear and horses can be picked up if you wish to end the trip here. It has been an easy three days but a great wilderness experience. You have crossed the Bechler area.



WASHBURN AREA

Three major creeks originate and flow north to the Yellowstone River from this area. They are Lava, Blacktail Deer, and Tower Creeks. The Washburn Range extends north and south through the center of the area. A trail goes up Tower Creek which is mainly used by fishermen. An old road, now blocked to vehicular traffic, extends from upper Blacktail cabin to the old horse pasture on Lava Creek. No other trails or roads are now extant and no more are needed as it is an easy country in which to travel.

At the close of the Cretaceous period in geological history, great earth movements occurred which formed the Rocky Mountains. In early Tertiary time, the Yellowstone area was dotted with volcanoes which spewed forth cubic miles of dust, lava, and rock fragments. These deposits were being eroded into mountains and valleys when another period of volcanic activity spread thousands of feet of lava across the earth's surface and left only the tops of some mountains protruding above the lava plains. Thus the Washburn Range is only the upper part of a much more extensive range that was buried millions of years ago.

Starting at Blacktail Deer Creek, where it crosses the Mammoth-Tower Fall road at an elevation of about 6,800 feet, you travel south up the creek and up the mountain slope to the top of Cook Peak, which is 9,742 feet. On this trip you see as varied an assortment of plantlife as you would see traveling a hundred miles north at a constant elevation. The first two or three miles is an open sagebrush and grass-covered plateau. Here and there on the plateau, in favored spots, are small aspen groves and some Douglas fir. Then, when the base of the hills is reached, you enter the lodgepole forest extending up to the windswept ridges where stunted spruce and fir

go as far up to the peaks as possible before the elements become too much for them. The summit of the various higher peaks—Cook, Folsom, and Prospect—are all over 9,300 feet. Although treeline is usually around 10,000 feet in the Park, here at 9,300 feet the exposure becomes intolerable, and the tops of these peaks are nearly treeless.

This is splendid hiking country. Much of the lower parts are open sagebrush-grassland. Deeply worn migration trails used by elk in spring and autumn lead through the forests over the Washburn Range and on toward Central Plateau to the south. These are invitations to the backpack camper to strike off the road and keep going.

Although mostly small, fish are abundant in nearly all of the streams in the Washburn country, and the hiker can usually have trout on the menu to supplement the grub he carries on his back.

Immediately after crossing the Gardner River Bridge on the Mammoth Hot Springs-Tower Fall road, you see an open ridge leading south. At one time a trail led up the ridge and into the country east of the Gardner River. It is still visible enough to be followed, and makes an excellent takeoff for a hike into that part of the Washburn area. It is about an hour's hike to the top of the ridge. In the spring, Bitterroot (the state flower of Montana) is especially abundant along the ridge where it and other flowers, such as larkspur, flax and lupine, make a fine display.

You will notice Sheepeater Cliffs on the map. Before white man came to the Park to stay, these cliffs were the home of the Sheepeater Indians. The Sheepeaters were apparently outcasts from the Shoshoni people and lived in such remote places to avoid their enemies. Evidence of old camps, such as teepee poles, can still be seen in secluded groves of aspen and fir. This is an accessible, but remote place where, in a short walk, you can enter a most interesting area of aspen groves, open sagebrush, grass, and pine and fir woods. Animals are numerous, especially in early summer, and from several vantage points, you can see the Gardner Canyon and the Gallatin Range to the west. Probably no one else will be there. This is a wilderness trip requiring no special equipment, and you can make it in a few hours.

CENTRAL PLATEAU AREA

It was through this area in 1877 that the Nez Perce Indians under Chief Joseph were pursued by the United States Army under General Howard. Encroachment upon their land (which lay west of the Rocky Mountains) by white settlers, and the subsequent attack upon them by the white man in an endeavor to force them to a reservation, brought about their retreat into western Montana and across Yellowstone Park. From here they planned on reaching the eastern buffalo grounds. En route they had three battles with the troops which had been sent against them. It was while in this Cen-

tral Plateau area that some of the wilder young braves captured a group of tourists. From this bit of history, Nez Perce Creek, the largest stream flowing out of the area, gets its name.

Hayden Valley, a large grassland-sagebrush area of about 23,000 acres, occupies the east central part of Central Plateau. Predominately a redtop-Junegrass range, it is the summer home of many elk. Ironically, there are probably more buffalo (or bison) there now than when Chief Joseph and his band passed through in 1877. These tough beasts winter there also. Thermal activity occurs in many parts of the Central Plateau; it helps keep some local areas relatively free of snow and makes it possible for the bison to get forage without brushing away several feet of snow to reach their food.

There are grizzly bears throughout this wilderness area and you should take every precaution to watch for and avoid them. Discreet alertness is the best policy when in grizzly country.



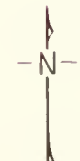
Good hiking trips are numerous. You can start one especially interesting trip from the Norris-Canyon Road five miles from the Canyon Visitor Center at the Plateau Trail takeoff. The first three miles lead through a lodgepole pine forest, then you come to an old forest fire burn. Shortly afterward you reach a meadow. West across the meadow are Cygnet Lakes, where bird life is abundant. Some rare species, such as sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans, are often seen. It is a wild scene well worth the hike even if you return from this point.

Yellowstone National Park

Back Country Areas



- Roads
- Trails
- Wilderness Boundaries
- Park Boundary
- State Boundaries
- Camps Mentioned



YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
from reduced base map
scale miles
1 0 1 2 3 4

If you have camp equipment for an overnight stay, hike another five miles to Mary Lake where a patrol cabin is located. This is for the official use of Park Service personnel so you will have to rely on your own camping equipment. It is a good place to camp.

At Mary Lake the trail down the mountain to the west, and down Nez Perce Creek, follows an historic old road. General Howard built it in 1877, as he pursued Chief Joseph and his followers across the area in that year.

From Mary Lake it is an easy hike of about ten miles to the point where Nez Perce Creek crosses the Madison Junction-Old Faithful road. Here you can be met by a car.

BUFFALO PLATEAU AREA

The Buffalo Plateau area is the smallest of the Park's wilderness areas; however, it is adjacent to the 64,000-acre Absaroka Primitive Area of the Gallatin National Forest. Together these two areas about double the total acreage of continuous wilderness.

Deer, elk, and moose are common. In autumn, when the first heavy snowfalls occur, it is a short trip for the deer and elk to travel from 9,000 feet down to the Yellowstone River, 6,000 feet in elevation and on the main migration route. Here they meet more herds coming from farther up the river. As the snows cover the forage to such a depth that pawing for feed is no longer productive, they proceed downstream to the lower parts of the winter range which are a little over 5,000 feet in elevation.

A few bison are found both in and outside of the Park. The state of Montana declared the bison a game animal some years ago. Now, whenever sufficient animals are found in the open hunting territory adjacent to the Park, special permits are drawn by hunters desiring to shoot a buffalo.

Marking the gateway to this area is a cone-shaped granite mountain, Hellroaring Mountain. It is one of the few original granite mountains of the Park which was not covered by lava during the Tertiary period.

The Buffalo Plateau and Hellroaring Creek trails take you through the heart of this area. Starting at Tower Fall Ranger Station, the trail leads down Elk Creek and crosses the Yellowstone River by a suspension bridge. On the north side of the river the trail divides. At this point you can take the left fork and go up Hellroaring Creek or, by taking the right fork, go to Buffalo Plateau.



MIRROR PLATEAU AREA

Bounded by the Absaroka Mountains on the east and the Yellowstone River on the west, this is a unique wilderness area. Fossil forests, large thermal areas, a goodly part of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, an abundant and varied wildlife, fishing, and mountain scenery are all to be found in this one roadless tract.

Easily accessible by a number of trails, most of which are on easy grades, you can cross the entire area from north to south in two days. This you can do by following the Lamar River Trail from the Lamar Ranger Station to Cold Creek, thence over the Mist Creek Pass and down Pelican Creek; or you can take off across the Mirror Plateau, if confident in your ability to "navigate", and make the same journey without benefit of a trail.

In order to get acquainted with the Lamar area, a trip, either by hiking or horseback from the Lamar Ranger Station to Fishing Bridge, is suggested. Later you can explore the more remote parts of the area. Some of the wildest back country of the entire Park is found here.

The trip up the Lamar must be taken after the high water goes down in July. The trail takes off near the junction of Soda Butte Creek and the Lamar River, about three miles east of the Lamar Ranger Station. The aspen groves and sagebrush-grassland between there and Cache Creek make a pleasant ride. Moose and bison are often seen.

In about a mile the trail leaves the bottom and starts up a gentle slope. If you are watching closely, you can see remnants of an old stone fireplace and cabin foundation on the right of the trail. This is believed to be the site of the cabin in which Harry Yount, first gamekeeper for Yellowstone National Park, had his headquarters in 1880.

About 3½ miles out, you cross Cache Creek. If your party is on horseback and got a late start, you should make camp here as there is no great amount of horsefeed for some miles. This is a good place

to camp. In addition to its grazing values, you can usually catch fish for supper in Cache Creek.

About five miles from Cache Creek, the trail forks. The left fork goes up to Miller Creek; take the right fork and go on up the Lamar River to the Cold Creek Patrol Cabin. Look for petrified trees en route. The meadows here are large and make a good place to camp and you can again catch trout here for supper. You are now about 16 miles from your starting point.

You can use the Cold Creek camp as a base for such interesting side trips as Frost Lake or Saddle Mountain. There is no trail to Saddle Mountain but it is not hard to pick a route to its summit by proceeding about 1½ miles up the Lamar River Trail from the Cold Creek Cabin and heading northeasterly in a zigzag fashion until you get to the summit. A herd of buffalo is usually seen in the high country below the summit because it is a favorite summer range for them.

Frost Lake is another side trip which you can take from the Cold Creek camp. This trail takes you up into the high country along the east boundary of the Park. A number of mountain peaks, among them Pyramid Peak, Notch Mountain, and Castor and Pollux Peaks, provide the camera enthusiast with some good shots.

When you break camp at Cold Creek, head southwest up the creek, then up Mist Creek, over the Mist Creek Pass, and down to the Pelican Springs Cabin. The total distance is about ten miles. This area affords a number of good campsites. A small spring across the creek from the patrol cabin provides drinking water which is as cold as natural water can be, about 32° F. as it comes from the ground. This is much more palatable in summer than is water from Pelican or Raven Creeks. Fishing is usually good in both of these streams.

From Pelican Cabin you can go in either of two directions. You may proceed over to Astringent Creek, up it to White, Fern and Tern Lakes, thence to Broad Creek and out to Canyon Village. You can find a good campsite en route near the bridge at the end of the old truck trail on Astringent Creek. This spot has been a base camp location for several large forest fires that have occurred in this area. Ten feet below this bridge is a hot spring for washing and shaving, while 200 feet above the bridge there is a small cold spring which, with the aid of a small dam, will provide enough water for cooking and drinking. There are also more good camping spots near Fern Lake and all along Broad Creek. After leaving Broad Creek you will not find any good camping spots for the next 14 miles into Canyon.

If you prefer not to go out via Canyon from Pelican Springs Cabin, it is only five miles down Pelican Creek to the old East Entrance Road. Going east on this road some four miles to the new East Entrance Road, you can pick up the horses and equipment by truck and end the trip, or you can proceed into the Thorofare Wilderness area by simply crossing the road and picking up the Thorofare Trail leading south along the east side of Yellowstone Lake.



GALLATIN AREA

This area includes the Gallatin Range of mountains and the surrounding country from which those headwater streams feeding the Gardner River on the east and the Gallatin and Madison Rivers on the west flow. The Gallatin Range is only about 20 miles long. The highest point in the Gallatins is Electric Peak (10,992 feet). It stands at the northern end of the range. Mount Holmes designates the southern terminus of these mountains and is 10,336 feet in elevation. Seventeen other peaks are scattered from north to south between these two. As you enter the area, either from the east or west, these peaks are a cool and beautiful invitation to the wilderness visitor.

You will notice that the Gardner River is spelled Gardner, while the town of Gardiner which is adjacent to the North Entrance is spelled Gardiner. The river derives its name from a fur trapper named Johnson Gardner who trapped for the American Fur Company in 1832. Gardners Hole, the large open flat between the Gardner River and Glen Creek in the vicinity of Swan Lake, is also named for this historical personage.

Four main trails lead from east to west across the Gallatin wilderness. These trails provide general access to the entire area. Several lesser ones lead to specific sections. Much of the crest of the range lies above treeline, or in the subalpine meadows interspersed with clumps of trees where cross-country travel is comparatively easy. As this high country is the summer home of large numbers of wild animals, you will probably spend considerable time off the trails photographing and observing them. Nowhere can wildlife photographers get pictures with more natural and beautiful backgrounds than here.

Let's describe some of the features of the northernmost route in order that you can make advance plans. The Sportsman Lake Trail begins at the Specimen Creek Campground which is about a mile southeast of the Gallatin Ranger Station on Highway 191.

It is 11 miles from the campground to Sportsman Lake. You can find two fair campsites en route and there is a good place to camp and fish at the Lake which is the logical camping spot for the first night. Here you might be able to get some good pictures of moose.

From the Lake, the trail takes you up a climb of about three miles to the divide at the head of the Gardner River. From this saddle you can easily reach the summit of Electric Peak by hiking up the open ridge to the northeast. There is a most impressive view from the summit.

From the saddle, the trail follows the Gardner River for about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, then goes over a ridge to Glen Creek, down it to Swan Lake Flat, thence through Snow Pass. From Snow Pass you follow an old dirt road to the main road at a point $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Mammoth. The total distance from Sportsman Lake to this point is about 14 miles.

The Fawn Pass trail leaves Highway 191 about five miles south of the Gallatin Ranger Station, leads east and a little south along Fan Creek and then climbs to Fawn Pass. Dropping off the Pass, it follows Fawn Creek to Gardners Hole, crosses the river, and leads on to Glen Creek where it meets the Sportsman Lake Trail. From that point you may follow Sportsman Lake Trail to the main road which it meets $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Mammoth. Good campsites are numerous and the chances of seeing elk, moose, or bear are excellent. Fan Creek is open to fishing, but, since Fawn Creek is a source of drinking water for Mammoth village, it is closed to fishing.

You have now covered 25 miles.

The Bighorn Pass trail leaves Highway 191 near Divide Lake, seven miles south of the Gallatin Ranger Station, and leads along the Gallatin River to Bighorn Pass where it drops down Panther Creek to end at Indian Creek Campground. This is a wonderful trip with beautiful mountain scenery. Campsites with good horsefeed are numerous all along the route. Fishing is good along the Gallatin River but on the east side of the range, Panther Creek is closed to fishing since it is also a source of domestic water supply. This is a 20 mile trip.

"Baker's Hole," is a part of the Gallatin area, at the south end of the Gallatin Range where Cougar, Maple, Gneiss and Campanula Creeks leave the hills, is very primitive and inviting for a short overnight horseback trip or a hike of two or three days. Reached by the Gneiss Creek Trail, which starts from the West Yellowstone-Madison Junction road four miles east of the West Entrance, it crosses the Madison River and leads in a northerly direction through lodgepole pine and open meadows to Campanula Creek. Then it leads down that creek to Highway 191, nine miles north of West

Yellowstone. The trip is an easy two-day hike or ride with time to explore or fish. You can find good campsites on any of the creeks en route. Moose, deer, elk and nesting geese are often seen.

If you desire to extend your trip to Mount Holmes or points north in the Gallatin Range, you can take a trail which leads from the Cougar Creek Patrol Cabin to the Mount Holmes Trail where you can enter the main Gallatin Range. This is a rather uninteresting, 16-mile ride and is not highly recommended.

THOROFARE AREA

This is a big area, and to make an extended trip into it, you should do so with pack and saddle horses. However, hikers can easily make shorter trips into this country starting from several points. The length of the trip depends only upon the individual's physical strength and enthusiasm. In any case the trip will be well worth-while. In this area you can enjoy a canoe, horseback, or backpack trip into a wonderful wilderness. It can be classed "big league," as primitive areas go.

This area is the summer home of many elk. Members of both the Northern Yellowstone and the Jackson Hole elk herd summer in the Upper Yellowstone and Snake River regions.

Probably the place to start a trip into the west side of this area is the Snake River Ranger Station. Due to distances and numerous stream crossings, the trip up the Snake River is best made by horseback. A favorite route for many pack trips originating at South Entrance leads up the Snake River to Red Creek, and then up Red Creek on the Heart Lake Trail to Heart Lake.

The trail crosses the Snake River just above the ranger station and goes through the woods on the south side of the river about five miles to a hot spring area. There is good horsefeed in the upper end of the meadow, a large warm stream in which to bathe, and, in the woods just across the river from the hot spots, is a small circular lake which you would not likely see unless you looked for it. Whether connected by underground waterways to the river is not known, but it is deep and clear. There are good trout in the lake, but sometimes they do not cooperate with the angler.

A short distance above the hot springs is a fork in the trail. You leave the South Boundary Trail here and go left on the Heart Lake Trail. Basin Creek Lake is about 4½ miles. This is also a good camp spot and the lake holds good cutthroat trout.

From Basin Creek Lake it is four more miles to Heart Lake. The trail goes along the west side of the lake for 2½ miles before you reach the Heart Lake Ranger Station. Usually a fire control aid is stationed there during the summer. He can give you information about the Heart Lake Geyser Basin, fishing, and the trails beyond this point.



The Thorofare trail takes off from the Lake Junction-East Entrance road at a point 16.7 miles from East Entrance. It generally follows the east shore of Yellowstone Lake to the end of the Southeast Arm; then it goes up the Yellowstone River to the Thorofare Ranger Station.

A number of creeks flow west out of the Absaroka Mountains to the Lake and river. The trail necessarily crosses them all. In the spring and early summer, high waters make some of them impassable even for horses. It is, therefore, best to wait until at least mid-July to ride or hike the Thorofare Trail.

This is an interesting section for many reasons. First, most of the streams entering the Lake are spawning grounds for the native cutthroat trout. Each spring the trout run up these tributaries. This brings bears as well as numerous other enemies to eat the eggs and young fish. The trail also parallels the main migration route used by the northern Elk herd in traveling to and from their summer range in the Upper Yellowstone country.

You can find good camping spots near the Park Point Patrol Cabin and at Beaverdam, Cabin and Monument Creeks. A Park ranger is stationed at the Thorofare Ranger Station to help you in any way possible.

The distance from the beginning of the trail on the East Entrance Road to the Thorofare Ranger Station is about 30 miles.

Trail Creek Trail should be mentioned, for it extends east and west connecting the Thorofare and Heart Lake Trails. This makes it possible to ride along the south end of Yellowstone Lake extending your trip as you see fit. You can find good camping spots along both Chipmunk and Outlet Creeks. The total mileage from the Cabin Creek Patrol Cabin on the Thorofare Trail to the Heart Lake Ranger Station, where you can pick up the Heart Lake Trail, is approximately 25 miles.

South Boundary Trail is somewhat of a misnomer as it does not actually follow the boundary. It is also an east-west trail. That part of the South Boundary Trail found in the Thorofare Wilderness area goes from the Thorofare Ranger Station, west to Mariposa Lake and the Fox Creek Patrol Cabin, and thence down the Snake River to the South Entrance of the Park.

Campspots are numerous all along the route. You can find good fishing at Mariposa Lake, and chances are good that you may see animals like the elk and moose. Space your camps for a 45-mile trip and remember, it makes for a far pleasanter trip if camp is made before the saddlesores become too painful and fatigue is too far advanced.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

General rules and regulations have been provided for the protection of all national parks. Special rules and regulations have been provided for the same purpose for the individual parks. The following rules of interest to the back country visitor are briefed for your information:

1. Firearms, explosives, traps, or devices designed to discharge any missile capable of destroying animal life are prohibited in the Park.

2. A special regulation prohibits dogs and cats more than $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile from roads, and in primitive camps.

3. A boat permit, issued by the Superintendent, is required for all boats operated upon the waters of the Park.



4. The formations found in the thermal areas of the Park are easily damaged. You must observe the regulations which prohibit injuring or defacing them, throwing objects into springs, pools or vents, or disturbing or removing of specimens of any kind, or destroying, injuring, or disturbing trees, flowers, birds, or animals.

5. You must have a campfire permit, obtainable at any ranger station, if you build a fire outside of improved campgrounds.

6. No cigarette, cigar, pipe heel, match, or other burning material should be discarded until completely extinguished.

7. Pollution in any manner of Park waters is prohibited.

8. Fishing regulations must be complied with, so ask for a copy of the complete regulations at any ranger station.

9. Campers should keep their campsites clean. Disposable garbage should be completely burned; cans should be burned and buried or brought out.

10. You are prohibited from installing permanent camping facilities. A camp may not be established in a Park or monument and used as a base for hunting outside such park or monument.

11. Campers should not leave their camps unattended for more than 48 hours without obtaining special permission in advance from the Superintendent. Camps must be completely razed, and the sites cleaned before the departure of the campers.

12. Motorcycles, other motor vehicles, or bicycles should not be operated on the trails. You must not operate a vehicle outside the roadways or designated parking areas.

13. Pedestrians on the trails should remain quiet when saddle or pack animals are passing.

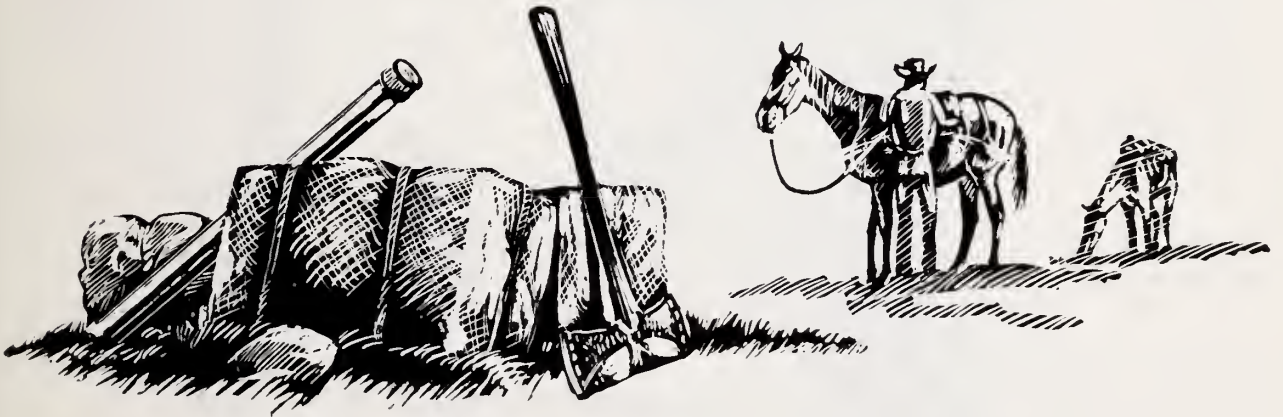
14. Horses should not be permitted to walk on the oil-surfaced roads except where designated trails cross such roads.

EQUIPMENT

Certainly you do not like to be physically uncomfortable on a back-country trip, therefore, you should take along basic equipment to insure health and well-being. On the other hand, if too much equipment is piled on the packhorses or carried on your back, the trip may become a nightmare.

Some Suggestions for the Horseback Trip

Even though you may have hired a guide and are really "duding it", these suggestions can often mean the difference between fun and misery.



1. The riding saddle should, in most cases, be a three-quarter, single rig. The three-quarter rig keeps the rider's weight forward in a more comfortable position whereas a full double-rigged saddle sits farther back on the horse, making it more tiring to horse and rider.

2. Wear a good fitting pair of western riding boots while in the saddle. They have a good shank and are far less tiring to the

foot than are shoes. The boot tops also protect your legs from snags, bugs, and bruises.

3. A pair of overshoes made to fit the riding boots are worth their weight in the morning when the grass is cold and wet, or during a rainy spell. A long riding slicker and a felt hat are a big comfort if the weather "goes sour".

4. Leather reinforced canvas paniers are the best thing in which to transport your personal gear on the packhorse.

The remainder of your clothing and personal articles will be more or less the same as for any other back-country outing. Be sure your sleeping bag will keep you warm at freezing temperatures. Take 2 or 3 bottles of mosquito repellent and, in early summer, use a mosquito-proof tent.

A Few Tips on Backpacking Equipment

There are numerous good books describing in detail the equipment necessary for a backpack trip. We will not attempt to duplicate the comprehensive lists found in most of them; however, modifications are usually necessary for a particular area—hence these tips.



Fortunately, fish are found in many Yellowstone streams. This can be considered in making up the food list. Trout have to be caught, though, so take adequate tackle. This should include plenty of flies (wets, drys, nymphs, and bucktails) and the proper weight leaders and lines. An 8-foot, 3-piece rod is fine, for the sections will be short enough to be lashed on the pack.

During July and August, the sleeping bag should be adequate for a minimum 32° temperature. After August it should be somewhat more substantial.

Shoes should provide adequate protection against sharp, hard volcanic rock. Soft moccasin-type shoes will not protect the foot when you are hiking in the slide rock or talus. The shoes should also have a vibram lug sole or one which will provide equally good footing.

Select all gear for lightness insofar as this is consistent with suitability.

Take some of the commoner dried foods, milk, potatoes, and soups with you. You can buy these at the concessioner's stores. Unusual items will necessarily be brought with you.

The sun has a lot of power in it, so bring sunglasses, chapstick for the lips, and sunburn lotion if your skin requires it.

SAFETY

1. Use caution when you are around thermal areas. Signs do not mark the dangerous areas in the back country, and many hot springs have a thin crust of earthlike material over their surfaces. This crust is often breakable and many severe burns have resulted when people have stepped through or fallen into these hidden pools.

2. Be especially careful around wet and slippery rocks and fast water. Lack of caution with these hazards has caused too many wilderness and fishing tragedies.

3. The animals in the park are wild and should be observed with caution. All bears are dangerous; moose and bison have been known to charge.

4. Picket or tie your horses safely and securely. Besides the inconvenience of having to walk a long distance to recover them, the appearance of stray animals may lead to needless search for a rider presumed injured.

5. If you suspect you are lost, remain calm. Sit down and plan your moves. The first natural impulse is to rush around; this feeling must be overcome to permit proper thinking.

- a. If possible, figure your general location on your map. The solution to your difficulty may then be evident.

- b. Signal possible searchers. (Three of almost anything indicates that help is needed, for example, light three well-spaced fires, properly controlled, on a shoreline after dark, or build a prominent smudge fire to attract the searchers. Help will likely appear on the scene in due time.)

6. For safe boating practices, get a copy of "Wilderness Boating on Yellowstone Lake." It is a free publication—ask for a copy at any ranger station.

PROCEDURES AND SOUND PRACTICES

Dude ranchers or licensed guides operating in the states adjacent to Yellowstone National Park desiring to conduct packtrips in the Park should write the Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, requesting a special use permit for such a purpose. These permits are issued subject to a number of conditions which are designed to insure the good faith and reliability of the permittee. Anyone desiring to contact a dude ranch in the vicinity of Yellowstone National Park may obtain such information by writing to The Dude Ranchers Association, P.O. Box 1363, Billings, Montana.

A party desiring to make either a horseback or hiking trip into the back country, on their own without benefit of a guide, must do the following:

1. Go to a ranger station and obtain a campfire permit for the area or areas they will be in.
2. Give their itinerary to the ranger. This is necessary for several reasons, including protection of the visitor and the protection of the Park.
3. Always report the completion of your trip to prevent a needless search, and turn in the campfire permit at the same time.

Persons going into the back country should by all means obtain a topographic map of the Park and should have a compass. You must know how to use them to avoid becoming lost or getting into difficult situations requiring the help of a rescue party. Obtain a topographic map of the Park from the U. S. Geological Survey, Denver 25, Colorado, or Washington 25, D. C., or at one of the museums in the Park. A good compass, such as the Silva with an azimuth face on which the magnetic declination can be set off, is preferable to the small pocket type.

A good campsite depends upon a number of requirements. If a horseback trip, horsefeed is the first essential, therefore, conserve it. Do not use more than your share by grazing stock for long periods at locations where grass is short and where conditions make it necessary for many outfits to use the site each season. All



picketpins should be changed each day, and must be removed from the ground upon breaking camp. The proper coordination of stock grazing is a responsibility of the Park rangers assigned to the area.

Water is abundant in Yellowstone—Keep it unpolluted and bury all human waste far enough from streams to prevent any contamination. Burn all garbage completely in the campfire. Burn tin cans until all the food and protective coating is removed and bury or bring them out with you.

Leave the least possible evidence that you were in the back country. Make your campfires no larger than necessary. This will leave a minimum of charcoal and, in a reasonable time, pine needles and duff will cover that. With care, you can leave a campsite so there will be no lasting indications that you were there.

Have a wonderful trip.

